

Chapter 18

The Business in Orchestras: A Concise Comparison Between Fundraising Methods in Brazil and United States

Gabriela de Souza
Instituto Cultural Filarmônica, Brazil

ABSTRACT

What many people cannot see is the structure that an orchestra requires to exist. Beyond the whole group of musicians who stand up in front of the audience, there are people working on the orchestra's image, needs, fundraising, organization, programming, management, and taking care of every detail to please the audience and also the musicians themselves. As any organization, orchestras need revenue and experienced professionals to move forward. It's not a one-man work; it has to be done by many hands and brains. This chapter shows how fundraising works in orchestras in the US and in Brazil—with some similarities with European model—including which lessons each country could take from the other when talking about this subject. It also describes some examples of how musicians are being involved in administrative issues and/or solutions, and how music education can result in a better basis to the art's management.

BACKGROUND

It is not possible to discover when music became present in people's lives. But, the orchestra history can be linked with the first signs of instruments as an autonomous part of a concert during the sixtieth-century. Since then, composers started to think out of their comfort zones, driving music through different paths and periods. These new ways of composing demanded orchestra's rethinking and restructuring its musician's formation, quantity and stage positioning.

An orchestra is an ensemble composed by many musicians from different families, including strings, winds, brass, percussion, harp and keyboard section. The number of musicians is various because it depends on the kind of repertoire the orchestra will play. The periods are divided in baroque, classical,

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romantic and modern, and the number of musicians required to play a baroque repertoire is less than a modern one.

When the groups were smaller, the leadership was the concertmaster role or a chord-playing musician on a harpsichord. However, with the sudden expansion of musicians in orchestras, the conductor became an important element. The conductor is the one who directs the whole group and unifies the performance by showing the time and interpretation of each music. Consequently, for a long period of time, most of them were also artistic director of the organization, and some were also important composers, like Gustav Mahler or Richard Wagner. This meant that every artistic decision was based on the artistic director/conductor's approval, programming the musical season as his vision of where the orchestra should be. For many years, decisions were centralized on one person's conceptions.

In the middle of nineteenth-century, some orchestral groups were created in Europe and in the USA, like Vienna Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic, both in 1842. These are not the first orchestras created in history, but are considered two of the greatest orchestras in the world until today. By that time, the artistic initiatives were usually supported by a small group of patrons who were art admirers willing to provide experiences for their community. Both orchestras mentioned above were created by the community and had the aristocracy's support. Following this model, more and more orchestras were created along the nineteenth and twentieth-century. It is possible to affirm that this kind of financial support was the first fundraising method for orchestra's maintenance in history.

After some organizations structuration and artistic improvement, the orchestras were seen as a cultural initiative that could bring to its audience, not only knowledge but social and mind transformation. Therefore, through Europe and some groups in the USA, the government started to support orchestras, and even participate in the foundation of some of them. For a period of time, almost all orchestras were supported by patrons and by the government. These grants could come from a national sphere or by local support. In each way, it was a matter related to public policy, not only as the individual donation or a small group's interest. Through nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, the orchestras were in a very good financial scenario, promoting a considerable artistic development.

Since the beginning, European orchestras were created to be supported by the government and also by the community. On the other hand, in the U.S., the main structure was patronage. Both ways were being succeeded in providing for orchestras the opportunity of sharing art and music with their communities, and in, some cases, with other cultures - with tours and recordings. By this time, Latin-America imported and implemented the European method of management to create new orchestras. Obviously, the format was adapted, but these new organizations were counting mainly on the government support.

However, the twentieth-century has not ended the same way it started. Unfortunately, an unusual need to justify art with numbers and to compete with other initiatives brought up the first crisis in the orchestra's realm. American orchestras faced a huge cut on their revenues, mostly because of their susceptibility of suffering from society's purchasing power or donation support. Even orchestras tightly bonded with their communities faced a crisis not expected and the idea of being supported only by patrons was no longer enough. In Europe, the crisis arrived in the economy, therefore, the government was affected and, as usual, culture suffered cuts and had to be restructured to survive. Unexpectedly, in Brazil, the few existing groups were growing and being structured to function based on a new model of management, the one which combines government, patrons support and also companies sponsorship. To exemplify this new model, it is fair to mention OSESP history briefly:

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